

whole at the expense of the parts. The Lombard invasion split Italy into two sections, both governed by foreign feudatories. While certain communes with varying rights of self-government, emerged from the chaos attendant on a dying empire, these lacked any unifying ties one with the other, or any bonds with the dynasties of foreign origin in the north and south where the connections were manifestly stronger with the Transalpine world than with their own. Yet these communes, for centuries the dispensers of civilization to the world, brought Italy a far greater prestige than would have come through any form of government or extent of domain.

With the conquests by northern powers in the sixteenth century, Italy lost this cultural high-priesthood. Although the foreigners did not absolutely suppress the individualism of the pre-existing states, they extended their rule over most of the peninsula and exercised a preponderant influence over the rest. After the overthrow of the Napoleonic regime, the impulse to unity became manifest, but complex moral and material obstacles delayed the movement until 1870 when the first Italian state, in the modern sense of the term, was established.

This is by no means a political history; all aspects of civilization and all factors shaping them are discussed in their peculiar manifestations and in their relations to similar Transalpine movements. The periods of transition, usually dull as ditchwater, are clarified and given their proper place in the political and cultural sequence. The treatment of post-war Italy is terse and admirably free from any taint of propaganda. The whole volume from first to last, in theme and in treatment, is one of the finest bits of historical writing achieved under the present regime. The translation is adequate but there are occasional slips, such as the failure to discover *Champagne* in the Italic *Sciam-pagna*; there are also some typographical errors, none of them serious. The bibliography stresses critical studies rather than historical monographs.

**STOP**

says the Herald Tribune

"As a fan in good standing, you'll have to know about all this and the sooner the better."

**THE CASE OF THE  
BAKER STREET IRREGULARS**  
by Anthony Boucher

An Inner Sanctum Mystery. \$2.

## Farewell to Fury

**REVOLUTION: WHY, HOW, WHEN?**  
By Robert Hunter. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1940. 385 pp., with index. \$3.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

THE American Left is forswearing revolution at a rapid rate. Almost daily someone who had at least flirted with Marx announces his farewell to revolution. It would be unfair to class Mr. Robert Hunter with the bright young proletarians of the typewriter who cleaved so manfully to the party line only a few years ago. But in addition to a long experience as a social worker in such centers as Toynbee Hall and Hull House, he has been a member of the Socialist Party, and was once its candidate for governor of Connecticut. His was, then, the revisionist and parliamentary socialism of the old days, the socialism that was to make revolution unnecessary. His latest book, though it has not the bitterness of Mr. Max Nomad's recent attack on revolutions, seems hardly inspired by even the mildest socialism.

Mr. Hunter is pretty completely disillusioned. The latest schemes for re-making the world have caught up with him in California; but he sees through them. They are as old as history. "When the same old problems reappear they are always confronted by the same old reformers and revolutionists offering the same old "irrefutable" nostrums. An anthology of panaceas from the times of Joseph, accompanied by notes of results achieved, if read along with Aristotle's "Politics," would supply any

legislator with all he needs to know." This last statement is perhaps at once too pessimistic and too optimistic. Wisdom of this sort has, at any rate, been rare among legislators.

This book is by no means a methodical survey of the history of revolutions. It has some interesting reflections on revolutionists Mr. Hunter has known in the flesh, mostly Europeans of the generation of Bebel and Jaurès. It has also some interesting sketches of historical parallels, and a good many suggestive leads for further study. Its chief contribution to the recent rather considerable literature on the study of revolutionary movements is its emphasis on the relation between certain economic variables and the stability of political arrangements. These variables are the price-cycle of inflation and deflation and the relative amount of the group income taken in taxes by the state. These two are themselves closely related. Heavy taxation may be said to bring on the revolution, inflation to make necessary the violence of the extremists. Mr. Hunter may indeed over-simplify his theory of revolutions. Furthermore, as he says with a regret that will be shared by many historians, with all our meticulous antiquarian research we yet know very little exact and solid about the history of prices. This reviewer inclines to the view that all monetary difficulties are essentially symptoms of troubles which lie beyond monetary theory. But he is also convinced that they are an important variable in most revolutionary situations. Mr. Hunter deserves our thanks for calling attention to them so emphatically and clearly.

## The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

| Title and Author   | Crime, Place, and Sleuth   | Summing Up  | Verdict    |
|--|--|---|------------|
| B AS IN BANSHEE<br>Laurence Treat<br>(Duell, Sloan & Pearce: \$2.) | Arrogant Adirondack land-owner shot and incinerated. Two retainers also perish miserably. Professorial deppity sheriff finally corners desperate killer. | Invigorating mountain atmosphere and unconventional characters redeem yarn that opens well but explodes into fantastic melodrama before final revelation. | Agreeable  |
| HOLIDAY HOMICIDE<br>Rufus King<br>(Crime Club: \$2.)               | Rich realtor shot in luxury cruiser moored in East River. Private Investigator Moon and tough Boswell take over case.                                    | Nut-loving Moon an odd fish among fictional sleuths. His quaint methods suffice to crack gory triple murder with aquatic climax.                          | Satisfying |
| MAIGRET TRAVELS SOUTH<br>Simenon<br>(Harcourt, Brace: \$2.)        | Two complete stories, "Liberty Bar" and "The Madman of Bergerac," exhibiting chunky French sleuth at top of form.  | Both plots based on sex crimes in sordid surroundings and handled without gloves. Maigret solves one from hospital cot!                                   | For adepts |
| DANGEROUS YOUNG MAN<br>George F. Worts<br>(Kinsey: \$2.)           | Peter Banyard, fresh from West, encounters murdering gangsters and slinky socialites in bullet-riddled melodrammer of wild Manhattan.                    | Creaky old idea freshened up to look fresh and exciting by stiff injections of gun-powder, champagne cocktails, and torrid romance.                       | Quickie    |

# THE NEW BOOKS

## Biography

**SINCE FIFTY. MEN AND MEMORIES, 1922-1928. Recollections of William Rothenstein.** Macmillan Company. 1940. 346 pp., with index. \$5.

While this third volume of Sir William Rothenstein's *Memories* lacks something of the graphic and pungent quality of its predecessors, it offers much to reward the reader. The author's stable and friendly character has justly brought him the acquaintance and often the intimacy of his eminent contemporaries in many lands. In the present volume, to sample it almost at random, we glimpse Thomas Hardy, Kipling, Robert Bridges, Yeats, George Moore, Arnold Bennett, Max Beerbohm, Chesterton, A. E. Housman, Tagore, "A. E." (Russell), T. E. Lawrence, Jacques Blanche, Matisse, Walter Sickert, Augustus John, Wyndham Lewis, besides a host of minor poets and painters, not to mention such interesting minor figures as royalties, prime ministers, and college provosts.

But such apparitions are on the whole fleeting and insubstantial, since for the most part the author has chosen to present his friends in their own words in their letters to himself. Now it is written that one may know the lion from his claw, but it is doubtful that a casual letter or note is clearly marked by the claw of the literary or artistic lion who takes his pen in hand. The procedure largely deprives us of Sir William's notable gift as a portraitist in words, and leaves this volume rather an engaging *pot-pourri* than a coherent book.

Taken in this spirit, it offers much to the reader who will skim its pages perceptively. Naturally political conclusions should not be drawn from a nonpolitical book, yet Sir William's evident tenderness for Ramsay MacDonald, Earl Baldwin, and Mr. Neville Chamberlain has its symptomatic importance, for Sir William's is, on any British scale, an uncommonly robust intelligence. If he thinks it may be better to risk national survival than to assure it in any way that could possibly be regarded as inconsiderate, unseemly, or ungentlemanly, what must the upper and upper-middle classes generally have been thinking during the Munich years and earlier?

In this literary pudding plums really abound, but they have to be found. Has anything more cheering and more just been said on the perennial theme of old age than Yeats's observation as he and the author motored back to London?—"When I was young, my mind was a grub, my body a butterfly; now, in my old age, my body is a grub, my mind a butterfly."

F. J. M., Jr.

## Current Affairs

**WHY WAR? Essays and Addresses on War and Peace.** By Nicholas Murray Butler. Scribner's. 1940. 323 pp., with index. \$2.50.

Dr. Butler has had so long and honorable a career as an advocate of collective security, and the recently published first volume of his reminiscences, "Through the Busy Years," contained so many interesting and hitherto unrevealed glimpses of the inner workings of American politics, that one naturally turns to his latest book with an eager anticipation of good things to come. And the keenness of one's appetite is made the keener by the promise of the title.

Unfortunately, "Why War?" belies both the hope and the promise. It is a collection of occasional—and often very perfunctory—papers and speeches—everything, apparently, that the President of Columbia University has said or written on the subject of war and peace in more than two years. Considered separately, each one of these essays and addresses is doubtless adequate to the occasion for which it was prepared. But when they are gathered together in a book the prevailing impression they leave in a reader's mind is one of repetitiousness.

Yet there are good things in the book. It is good, for instance, to see an American university president quoting Goethe to Hitler. It is good to be reminded that the sentence so frequently ascribed to Washington's Farewell Address is really to be found in Jefferson's First Inaugural. It is good to know that long before it happened Dr. Butler was predicting the Nazi-Soviet alliance.

But the good things are few and far between, and one must read through many different versions of what are essentially the same three or four speeches to find them.

V. F.

## Travel

**LET'S GO WITH BOB DAVIS.** By Robert H. Davis. Appleton-Century. 1940. 452 pp. \$3.

With millions of words behind him and over a million actual miles of travel Bob Davis has still the verve to write a new book on his adventures. Neither danger nor weariness will ever daunt this grandest of old editors, and boredom he never knows, as you see at a glance through the omnigenous index to these pieces culled from his column in the *New York Sun*. People, rather than places, have interested him, and he has a fine ear for anecdote. He tells of a Singhalese with strange power over elephants, of the seventy-five children of a Venezuelan dictator, of Two-step John of the Yukon who offered a girl her weight in

gold and two-stepped half her pounds away. These are character sketches in the best Bret Harte tradition, and the tales of bears, mongooses, wild dogs hunting with leopards, show the animals as clearly individual as the author's human friends.

India, South America, Gaspé, Alaska, Puerto Rico revolve like a cyclorama before Bob Davis, who points out here the throne room of a ruined temple where jungle cats suckle their young, and here natives who still use a bow which few civilized men could pull. He gives more than mere vignettes; he gives some historical background to each of his tales and illustrates them with his own photographs. The book is uneven in quality, but the best of it is very fine indeed.

H. D.

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